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Charles S. "Steve" Parrott
Director - State Regulatory Affairs

Mid-Atlantic Operations
14111 Capital Boulevard
Wake Forest, North Carolina 27587-5900
Telephone: (919) 554-7039
Fax: (919) 554-7595

RECEIVED

DEC 11 1997

FCC MAIL ROOM December 11, 1997

Mr. John Ricker
Universal Service Administrative Company
100 South Jefferson Road
Whippany, NJ 07981

Dear Mr. Ricker:

United Telephone Company of the Carolinas d/b/a Sprint (United) requests certification of its Lifeline and Link-Up programs for low-income consumers pursuant to the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) Report and Order released, May 8, 1997, in CC Docket No. 96-45, and as described in 47 C.F.R. part 54.401(d) of the FCC's rules and as ordered by the South Carolina Public Service Commission (SCPSC) pursuant to Docket No. 97-239-C in Order No. 97-753.

The Lifeline Plan will be offered to qualifying residential customers beginning January 1, 1998 with provisions to waive the Subscriber Line Charge (SLC) and an additional \$1.75 in Federal support authorized by the SCPSC in the reduction of intrastate local rates. Beginning January 1, 1999, qualifying South Carolina residential customers will receive the maximum Lifeline program benefit of \$10.50. The additional state support of \$3.50 will be funded through the intrastate Universal Service Fund as mandated in SCPSC Order No. 97-753 with federal matching of \$1.75.

The Link-Up Plan will allow qualifying residential customers to receive a credit equal to one-half of the customary service charges or \$30.00, whichever is less, for initial installation.

To be eligible for Lifeline and Link-Up, a subscriber must be a recipient of Medicaid, food stamps or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), previously known as the AFDC program. These programs represent the qualifying criteria established by the SCPSC for the existing Link-Up program established in 1988. Support shall be available for the primary residential connection only. Using data provided by the South Carolina Department of Social Services, we have estimated that approximately 6,277 customers will qualify for Lifeline assistance in 1998. The methodology used to prepare this estimate is provided in Attachment 1.

Universal Service Administrative Company
December 8, 1997
Page Two

United's General Subscriber Services Tariff which established the Lifeline and Link-Up programs is provided in Attachment 2 for your review. Additionally, the SCPSC's Order No. 97-753 in Docket No. 97-239 authorizing United's Lifeline assistance program is provided in Attachment 3 (see page 16) and SCPSC Order No. 97-958 which designates United as an Eligible Telecommunication Carrier is provided in Attachment 4.

We respectfully request that our Lifeline and Link-Up programs receive the necessary FCC certification in order that we may proceed with implementation on January 1, 1998.

Should you wish to discuss this request, please contact me at telephone number 919-554-7039 or Donald Horton at telephone number 919-554-7276.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Steve Parrott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "C." and last name "Parrott" clearly distinguishable.

C. Steve Parrott
Director - State Regulatory Affairs

CSP/abg

Attachments

cc: Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission
Sheryl Todd, Federal Communications Commission
Dr. Glenn Rhyne, South Carolina Public Service Commission
Don Horton, Sprint Mid-Atlantic Operations
Laura Sykora, Sprint Mid-Atlantic Operations
John Stallings, Sprint Mid-Atlantic Operations
Marty Bocock, Sprint Mid-Atlantic Operations

United Telephone Company of the Carolinas

**ESTIMATE OF CUSTOMERS
QUALIFYING FOR LIFELINE ASSISTANCE**

1998

WIRE CENTER	ACCESS LINES	Food Stamp House Holds <i>(County Data)</i>	Total House Holds <i>(County Data)</i>	RATIO <i>(Food Stamp HH to Total HH)</i>	Estimated Qualified Access Lines <i>(Customers)</i>
	A	B	C	D	E
				(B / C)	(A * D)
Beaufort	13,620	2,572	39,949	0.0644	877
Branchville	717	6,782	32,402	0.2093	150
Chappells	266	1,414	13,314	0.1062	28
Cross Hill	1,183	2,119	22,505	0.0942	111
Estill	2,310	1,226	7,069	0.1734	401
Eutawville	2,216	6,782	32,402	0.2093	464
Greenwood (CDSO)	15,012	1,879	25,850	0.0727	1,091
Greenwood (BRSO)	4,892	1,879	25,850	0.0727	356
Hampton	3,290	1,226	7,069	0.1734	571
Hodges	1,195	1,879	25,850	0.0727	87
Holly Hill	2,465	4,323	55,049	0.0785	194
Laurel Bay	5,070	2,572	39,949	0.0644	326
Mountville	274	2,119	22,505	0.0942	26
Ninety Six	2,225	1,879	25,850	0.0727	162
Ridgeland	3,867	948	6,247	0.1518	587
St. Helena	4,748	2,572	39,949	0.0644	306
Saluda	3,677	702	6,402	0.1097	403
Troy	427	1,879	25,850	0.0727	31
Ware Shoals	1,471	1,879	25,850	0.0727	107
Total Company					6,277

United Telephone Company of the Carolinas

**ESTIMATE OF CUSTOMERS
QUALIFYING FOR LIFELINE ASSISTANCE**

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Charles S. "Steve" Parrott
Director - State Regulatory Affairs

Mid-Atlantic Operations
14111 Capital Boulevard
Wake Forest, North Carolina 27587-5900
Telephone: (919) 554-7039
Fax: (919) 554-7595

December 4, 1997

Mr. Charles Ballentine
Executive Director
South Carolina Public Service Commission
111 Doctors Circle
P. O. Drawer 11649
Columbia, SC 29211

Dear Mr. Ballentine:

Attached are the required number of copies of revised pages for United Telephone Company of the Carolinas' General Subscriber Services Tariff for your consideration and approval:

Index	Sixteenth Revised Index Page 3
Section U1.	Seventeenth Revised Page 6
Section U3.	Fourteenth Revised Contents Page 1
	Original Page 19
	Original Page 20
	Original Page 21
Section U4.	Eleventh Revised Contents Page 1
	Nineteenth Revised Page 3
	Seventh Revised Page 4
	Original Page 5

This tariff filing implements the FCC's mandated Lifeline and Link-Up programs. Additionally, the state matching credit ordered by this Commission (effective January 1, 1999) is included.

Pursuant to Section 58-9-576(B)(6), this Tariff is presumed valid and becomes effective fourteen (14) days after filing.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Larry Biddle at 1-800-838-2743.

Sincerely,

C. Steve Parrott

CSP/abg
Attachments

cc: Marty Bocoock, Director-External Affairs SC
Sprint Mid-Atlantic Operations
1122 Lady Street, Suite 1050
Columbia, SC 29201

GENERAL SUBSCRIBER SERVICES TARIFF

United Telephone Company of the Carolinas (DBA)
UNITED TELEPHONE-SOUTHEAST
SOUTH CAROLINA

Sixteenth Revised Index Page 3
Cancels Fifteenth Revised Index Page 3

ISSUED: December 15, 1997

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 1998

INDEX

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Impersonation of Another with Fraudulent Intent.....	U2	4
Incoming Billed Number Screening (IBNS).....	U13	17
Indemnifying Agreement.....	U2	20
Indented Listings.....	U6	5
Initial Service Periods.....	U2	10
Installation Charges.....	U4	1
Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) - Basic Rate Interface/Single Line.....	U24	1
Interconnection of Public Cellular Mobile Service.....	U16	1
IntraLATA Long Distance (Local Toll) Verification and Emergency Interrupt Service.....	U18	7
ISDN-BRI Service.....	U24	1
Leased Lines.....	U22	1
Liability of the Company.....	U2	19
Lifeline.....	U3	19
Limitations and Use of Service.....	U2	1
Limited Communications.....	U2	3
Line Terminations - Secretarial Service.....	U8	2
Link-Up.....	U4	4
Listings, Directory.....	U6	1
Local Calling Areas.....	U3	9
Local Measured Service (LMS).....	U3	2
Local Operator Verification/Interruption Service.....	U3	12
Local Toll Directory Assistance Service.....	U18	7
Local Toll Optional Calling Plans (LTOCPs).....	U20	1
Business Sense Local Toll Service.....	U20	5
Sprint Sense Local Toll Service.....	U20	4
Local Toll Volume Discount Plan Service.....	U100	6
Value Plus Service.....	U100	7
Long Distance (Local Toll) Message Telecommunications Service.....	U18	1
Conference Service.....	U18	8
Directory Assistance.....	U18	7
IntraLATA Long Distance (Local Toll) Verification and Emergency Interrupt Service.....	U18	7
Two-Point Service.....	U18	1
Maintenance and Repairs.....	U2	13
Minimum Billing Charge.....	U4	2
Miscellaneous Devices Provided by the Subscriber.....	U2	2
Miscellaneous Service Arrangements.....	U13	1
Miscellaneous Listings.....	U6	4
Monthly Exchange Rates.....	U3	1
Moves and Changes.....	U4	1
Moves or Changes (Rearrangements) of Existing Plant.....	U5	4
Network Interface Device.....	U2	22
Network Protection Criteria.....	U15	9
Nonlist Number.....	U6	3.1
Nonpublished Numbers.....	U6	3
Nonpublished and Nonlist Numbers (Rates).....	U6	3.1
Numbers, Telephone.....	U2	1
Obsolete Service Offerings.....	U100	1
Obscene, Profane or Abusive Language.....	U2	4
Operator Assisted Local Calls.....	U3	12
Optional Local Measured Service (See Local Measured Service).....	U3	2
Originating Call Screening.....	U7	1.1
Outside Base Rate Area Charge.....	U3	10
Ownership of Equipment.....	U2	12
Party Line Service.....	U2	6
Payment Arrangements and Credit Allowances.....	U2	17
Payment For Service.....	U2	18
Payphone Line Service.....	U7	1
Personal Hearing Aids.....	U15	11
Period for the Presentation of Claims.....	U2	20
Pole Line Construction		
On Private Property.....	U5	3
On Public Highways.....	U5	1

GENERAL SUBSCRIBER SERVICES TARIFF

United Telephone Company of the Carolinas (DBA)
UNITED TELEPHONE-SOUTHEAST
SOUTH CAROLINA

Seventeenth Revised Page 6
Cancels Sixteenth Revised Page 6

ISSUED: December 15, 1997

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 1998

U1. DEFINITION OF TERMS

INCOMING BILLED NUMBER SCREENING (IBNS) (U13)

An Operator Service which screens incoming collect or third number billed calls that are placed to the customer. IBNS is limited by the number of toll centers subscribing to the national database.

INDENTED LISTING (U6)

See "Directory Listing."

INITIAL CHARGE (U4)

See "Installation Charge."

INITIAL PERIOD (U18)

The initial period is the interval of time allowed at the rate quoted for long distance (local toll) connection between given points. All initial period rates specified in this tariff are for connections of the time periods specified in the various sections.

INITIAL SERVICE PERIOD (U2)

The minimum period of time for which service, facilities and equipment are provided; Termination Charge(s) invoked if term not expired.

INSIDE WIRE (CUSTOMER PREMISES) (U2)

That wire, including connectors, blocks and jacks, within a customer's premises that extends between the termination of the exchange access line and those standard jack locations within the customer's premises to which terminal equipment can be connected for access to the exchange access line.

INSTALLATION CHARGE (U4)

A non-recurring charge applying to the installation of other tariffed service offerings and is in addition to non-recurring Service Connection Charges as set forth in Section U4 of this tariff, applying to the establishment of basic telephone service.

INWATS (800/888 SERVICE) (U19)

Inward Wide Area Telephone Service (800/888 Service) is the furnishing of facilities for dial-type telecommunication from points throughout the service area to a (WATS) access line.

ISDN-BRI SERVICE (U24)

Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) is an intraLATA group of services supported by the ISDN architecture. ISDN-Basic Rate Interface (BRI) Service supports simultaneous transmission of voice and data services on the same exchange access line.

LIFELINE (U3)

A low income assistance program, available to qualified residential subscribers, which reduces monthly charges for local service through credits supported by universal service funding.

LINE SIDE CONNECTION (U16)

The connection of a transmission path to the line side of a Local Exchange Switching System.

LINK-UP (U4)

A low income assistance program, available to qualified residential subscribers, which reduces charges for connection of service through credits supported by universal service funding.

LOCAL ACCESS AND TRANSPORT AREA (LATA) (U16)

A geographic area established for the provision and administration of communications service. It encompasses one (1) or more designated exchanges which are grouped to serve common social, economic and other purposes.

LOCAL CALLING AREA (U3)

See "Local Service Area."

LOCAL DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE (U3)

Local Directory Assistance is furnished to the subscriber of the Company's local service for the obtaining of local telephone numbers of other subscribers served by the Company.

LOCAL MEASURED SERVICE (U3)

See "Exchange Service."

LOCAL MESSAGE (U2)

See "Message."

GENERAL SUBSCRIBER SERVICES TARIFF

United Telephone Company of the Carolinas (DBA)
UNITED TELEPHONE-SOUTHEAST
SOUTH CAROLINA

Fourteenth Revised Contents Page 1
Cancels Thirteenth Revised Contents Page 1

ISSUED: December 15, 1997

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 1998

U3. BASIC LOCAL EXCHANGE SERVICE

CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
U3.1 <u>GENERAL</u>	1
U3.2 <u>RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE</u>	1
U3.3 <u>MONTHLY EXCHANGE RATES</u>	1
U3.3.1 Flat Rate Service	1
U3.3.2 Local Measured Service (LMS)	2
U3.3.3 Region Call	5
U3.3.4 Rates and Charges	7
U3.4 <u>LOCAL CALLING AREAS</u>	9
U3.4.1 General	9
U3.4.2 Local Service Areas	9
U3.5 <u>OUTSIDE BASE RATE AREA CHARGE</u>	10
U3.6 <u>DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE SERVICE</u>	11
U3.6.1 General	11
U3.6.2 Rates and Charges	11
U3.7 <u>LOCAL OPERATOR VERIFICATION/INTERRUPTION SERVICE</u>	12
U3.7.1 General	12
U3.7.2 Application of Rates and Charges	12
U3.7.3 Rates and Charges	12
U3.8 <u>OPERATOR ASSISTED LOCAL CALLS</u>	12
U3.9 <u>SHARING AND RESALE OF BASIC LOCAL EXCHANGE SERVICE</u>	13
U3.9.1 General	13
U3.9.2 Conditions	13
U3.9.3 Rates and Charges	14
U3.9.4 Monthly Rates	16
U3.10 <u>LIFELINE</u>	19
U3.10.1 Description of Service	19
U3.10.2 Regulations	19
U3.10.3 Rates and Charges	21

GENERAL SUBSCRIBER SERVICES TARIFF

United Telephone Company of the Carolinas (DBA)
UNITED TELEPHONE-SOUTHEAST
SOUTH CAROLINA

Original Page 19

ISSUED: December 15, 1997

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 1998

U3. BASIC LOCAL EXCHANGE SERVICE

U3.10 LIFELINE

U3.10.1 DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE

- a. The Lifeline program is designed to increase the availability of telecommunications services to low income subscribers by providing a credit to monthly recurring local service for qualifying residential subscribers. Basic terms and conditions are in compliance with FCC Order No. 97-157 on Universal Service, which adopts the Federal-State Joint Board's recommendation in CC Docket No. 96-45, which complies with the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Specific terms and conditions are as prescribed by the South Carolina Public Service Commission and are as set forth in this tariff.
- b. Lifeline is supported by federal and state universal service support mechanisms.
- c. Effective January 1, 1998, federal baseline support of \$5.25 is available for each Lifeline service and is passed through to the subscriber. Effective January 1, 1999, an additional \$3.50 credit is provided by the state universal service fund. Supplemental federal support of \$1.75, matching one-half (1/2) of the state contribution, will also be passed along to the Lifeline subscriber. The total Lifeline credit available to an eligible customer in South Carolina is \$5.25 as of January 1, 1998 and \$10.50 as of January 1, 1999. The amount of credit will not exceed the charge for local service, which includes the access line, the Subscriber Line Charge, local usage and Region Call usage and/or packages.

U3.10.2 REGULATIONS

- a. General
 - (1) Customers eligible under the Lifeline program are also eligible for connection assistance under the Link-Up program.
 - (2) One (1) low income credit is available per household and is applicable to the primary residential connection only. The named subscriber must be a current recipient of any of the low income assistance programs identified in Section U3.10.2.b. following
 - (3) A Lifeline customer may subscribe to any local service offering available to other residence customers.
 - (4) Toll Blocking (S&E Code AAATLBK(USP), if elected, will be provided at no charge to the Lifeline subscriber.
 - (5) The deposit requirement is not applicable to a Lifeline customer who subscribes to toll blocking. If a Lifeline customer removes toll blocking prior to establishing an acceptable credit history, a deposit may be required. When applicable, advance payments will not exceed the Connection and Local Service Charges for one (1) month.
 - (6) The PICC will not be billed to Lifeline customers who subscribe to toll blocking and do not presubscribe to a Long Distance Carrier.
 - (7) A Lifeline subscriber's local service will not be disconnected for non-payment of regulated toll charges. Local service may be denied for non-payment of local calls in accordance with Section U2 of this tariff. Access to toll service may be denied for non-payment of regulated tolls. A Lifeline subscriber's request for reconnection of local service will not be denied if the service was previously denied for non-payment of toll charges.
 - (8) The non-discounted federal Lifeline credit amount will be passed along to resellers ordering local service at the prescribed resale discount from this tariff, for their eligible end users. The additional credit to the end user will be the responsibility of the reseller. Eligible Carriers, as defined by the FCC, are required to establish their own Lifeline programs.

GENERAL SUBSCRIBER SERVICES TARIFF

United Telephone Company of the Carolinas (DBA)
UNITED TELEPHONE-SOUTHEAST
SOUTH CAROLINA

Original Page 20

ISSUED: December 15, 1997

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 1998

U3. BASIC LOCAL EXCHANGE SERVICE

U3.10 LIFELINE (Cont'd)

U3.10.2 REGULATIONS (Cont'd)

b. Eligibility

- (1) To be eligible for a Lifeline credit, a customer must be a current recipient of any one (1) of the following low income assistance programs, per the FCC 97-157, paragraph 374.
 - (a) Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), previously known as AFDC.
 - (b) Food Stamps
 - (c) Medicaid
- (2) All applications for service are subject to verification with the state agency responsible for administration of the qualifying program.

c. Certification

- (1) Proof of eligibility in any of the qualifying low income assistance programs should be provided to the Company at the time of application of service. The Lifeline credit will not be established until proof of eligibility has been received by the Company. If the customer requests installation prior to the Company's receipt of proof of eligibility, the requested service will be provided without the Lifeline credit. When eligibility documentation is provided subsequent to installation, the Lifeline credit will be provided on a going forward basis.
- (2) The Company reserves the right to periodically audit its records, working in conjunction with the appropriate state agencies, for the purpose of determining continuing eligibility. Information obtained during such audit will be treated as confidential information to the extent required under State and Federal laws. The use or disclosure of information concerning enrollees will be limited to purposes directly connected with the administration of the Lifeline plan.
- (3) When a customer is determined to be ineligible as a result of an audit, the Company will contact the customer. If the customer cannot provide eligibility documentation, the Lifeline credit will be discontinued.
- (4) Resellers providing Lifeline service from this tariff are responsible for determining proof of eligibility prior to requesting the service. Disclosure requirements described in Section U3.10.2c.(2) preceding are applicable to resellers of Lifeline service.

GENERAL SUBSCRIBER SERVICES TARIFF

United Telephone Company of the Carolinas (DBA)
UNITED TELEPHONE-SOUTHEAST
SOUTH CAROLINA

Original Page 21

ISSUED: December 15, 1997

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 1998

U3. BASIC LOCAL EXCHANGE SERVICE

U3.10 LIFELINE (Cont'd)

U3.10.3 RATES AND CHARGES

a. General

- (1) Lifeline is provided as a monthly credit on the eligible residential subscriber's access line bill for local service.
- (2) Service Charges in Section U4 of this tariff are applicable for installing or changing Lifeline service.
- (3) Link-Up connection assistance in Section U4 of this tariff may be available for installing or relocating Lifeline service.
- (4) The Secondary Service Charge in Section U4 of this tariff is not applicable when existing service is converted intact to Lifeline.

b. The total Lifeline credit consists of one (1) federal credit plus one (1) Company credit.

(1) Federal Credit

	<u>Monthly Credit</u>	
	<u>1-1-98</u>	<u>1-1-99</u>
(a) Temporary Assistance to Needy Families	\$5.25	\$7.00
(b) Food Stamps	5.25	7.00
(c) Medicaid	5.25	7.00

(2) State Credit

(a) All Programs, One (1) Per Lifeline Service	0.00	3.50
------------------------------------------------	------	------

GENERAL SUBSCRIBER SERVICES TARIFF

United Telephone Company of the Carolinas (DBA)
UNITED TELEPHONE-SOUTHEAST
SOUTH CAROLINA

Eleventh Revised Contents Page 1
Cancels Tenth Revised Contents Page 1

ISSUED: December 15, 1997

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 1998

U4. SERVICE CHARGES

CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
U4.1 <u>DEFINITIONS</u>	1
U4.1.1 Service Connection Charges	1
U4.1.2 Installation Charges	1
U4.1.3 Minimum Billing Charge	2
U4.1.4 Maintenance of Service Charge	2
U4.1.5 Nonpublished and Nonlist Number	2
U4.2 <u>RATES AND CHARGES</u>	2
U4.3 <u>APPLICATION OF RATES AND CHARGES</u>	2
U4.3.1 General	2
U4.3.2 Service Charges for Connection of New Service	3
U4.3.3 Charges Do Not Apply in the Cases Listed	3
U4.3.4 Reserved For Future Use	3
U4.3.5 Link-Up	4

(D) (1)
(N)

GENERAL SUBSCRIBER SERVICES TARIFF

United Telephone Company of the Carolinas (DBA)
UNITED TELEPHONE-SOUTHEAST
SOUTH CAROLINA

Nineteenth Revised Page 3
Cancels Eighteenth Revised Page 3

ISSUED: December 15, 1997

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 1998

U4. SERVICE CHARGES

U4.3 APPLICATION OF RATES AND CHARGES (Cont'd)

U4.3.2 SERVICE CHARGES FOR CONNECTION OF NEW SERVICE

- a. Except as provided in this tariff, all requests for service requiring either service ordering, access line work or trip to premises, are subject to the appropriate charges required to provide that service as provided in Section U4.2 preceding.
- b. When the service desired requires more than one (1) access line, the sum of the separate charges for each function applies except as provided in this tariff. Only one (1) Service Ordering Charge applies per order written regardless of the quantity of work ordered.
- c. When service is re-established at a location which has been destroyed by fire or made untenable by fire, wind or flood, Service Connection Charges do not apply. If the subscriber desires service at a new location for a temporary period, Service Charges will apply. Changes in the location of existing service to points outside the premises occupied by the subscriber are considered new service connections at the new location.
- d. Service Charges may be required to be paid at the time of application for service.
- e. Transfers of responsibility or change of name involving a change of responsibility should be handled in accordance with provisions of Section U2.3.5 of this tariff.

U4.3.3 CHARGES DO NOT APPLY IN THE CASES LISTED BELOW:

- a. Changes required for proper maintenance of the equipment or service.
- b. Changes made at the time of or due to a change in the Class-of-Service provided such inside moves or changes are necessary because of the change in Class-of-Service.
- c. Changes in the telephone numbers made in the judgment of the Company that such changes are necessary for continuation of satisfactory service.
- d. Service Charges do not apply when ExpressTouch Service or Custom Calling Features are installed concurrent with an upgrade in service.
- e. The Record Order Charge does not apply for changing the primary listing of a residence customer to the name of the remaining spouse in event of death or divorce of the spouse currently listed or to the new spouse in the event of remarriage.
- f. When a speech or impaired hearing subscriber makes subsequent application for discounted local toll rates.

U4.3.4 RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE

(D) (I

GENERAL SUBSCRIBER SERVICES TARIFF

United Telephone Company of the Carolinas (DBA)
UNITED TELEPHONE-SOUTHEAST
SOUTH CAROLINA

Seventh Revised Page 4
Cancels Sixth Revised Page 4

ISSUED: December 15, 1997

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 1998

U4. SERVICE CHARGES

U4.3 APPLICATION OF RATES AND CHARGES (Cont'd)

U4.3.5 LINK-UP

a. General

- (1) Link-Up is a program designed to increase the availability of telecommunications services to low income subscribers by providing a credit to the non-recurring installation and service charges to qualifying residential subscribers. Basic terms and conditions are in compliance with FCC Order No. 97-157 on Universal Service, which adopts the Federal-State Joint Board's recommendation in CC Docket No. 96-45, which complies with the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Specific terms and conditions are as prescribed by the South Carolina Public Service Commission and are as set forth in this tariff.
- (2) Link-Up is supported by the federal universal service support mechanism.
- (3) A federal credit amount of fifty (50) percent of the non-recurring charges for connection of service, up to a maximum of \$30.00, is available to be passed through to the subscriber.

b. Regulations

(1) General

- (a) Customers eligible under Link-Up are also eligible for monthly recurring assistance under the Lifeline program.
- (b) Link-Up connection assistance is available per household and is applicable to the primary residential connection only.
- (c) The Link-Up credit is available each time the customer installs or relocates the primary residential service.
- (d) To receive the credit, proof of eligibility must be provided prior to installation of service.
- (e) The total tariffed charges for connecting service, including service and other installation charges, are considered in the credit calculation.
- (f) The non-discounted federal credit amount will be passed along to resellers ordering local service at the prescribed resale discount from this tariff, for their eligible end users. Eligible Carriers, as defined by the FCC, are required to establish their own Link-Up programs.

(2) Eligibility

- (a) To be eligible for a Link-Up credit, the named subscriber must be a current recipient of any of the following low income assistance programs.
 - (1) Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), previously known as AFDC
 - (2) Food Stamps
 - (3) Medicaid
- (b) All applications for service are subject to verification with the state agency responsible for administration of the qualifying program.

GENERAL SUBSCRIBER SERVICES TARIFF

United Telephone Company of the Carolinas (DBA)
UNITED TELEPHONE-SOUTHEAST
SOUTH CAROLINA

Original Page 5

ISSUED: December 15, 1997

EFFECTIVE: January 1, 1998

U4. SERVICE CHARGES

U4.3 APPLICATION OF RATES AND CHARGES (Cont'd)

U4.3.5 LINK-UP (Cont'd)

b. Regulations (Cont'd)

(3) Certification

- (a) Proof of eligibility in any of the qualifying low income assistance programs should be provided to the Company at the time of application of service. The Link-Up credit will not be established until proof of eligibility has been received by the Company. If the customer requests installation without proof of eligibility, the requested service will be provided without the Link-Up credit.
- (b) The use or disclosure of information concerning enrollees will be limited to purposes directly connected to the administration of the Link-Up plan.
- (c) Resellers providing Link-Up from this tariff are responsible for determining proof of eligibility prior to requesting the service. Disclosure requirements described in Section 4.3.5b.(3)(b) preceding are applicable to resellers of Link-Up service.

c. Rates and Charges

- (1) The federal credit available for Link-Up connection is \$30.00 (maximum) or fifty (50) percent of the installation and service charges from this tariff, whichever is less.

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BEFORE
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
DOCKET NO. 97-239-C - ORDER NO. 97-958
NOVEMBER 24, 1997

IN RE: Proceeding to Establish Guidelines) ORDER
for an Interstate Universal Service) DESIGNATING LECS
) AS ELIGIBLE
) TELECOMMUNICATIONS
) CARRIERS

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina on the requests of BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc. (BellSouth), United Telephone Company of the Carolinas (United), GTE South Incorporated (GTE), and the South Carolina Telephone Coalition Member Companies (SCTC or the Coalition Companies) (See Attachment A for a list of Coalition Companies) for designation as Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETCs) within their respective incumbent LEC service areas.

Section 214(e)(2) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 provides that "A State Commission shall upon its own motion or upon request designate a common carrier that meets the requirements of paragraph 214(e)(1) as an eligible telecommunications carrier for a service area designated by the State Commission." Pursuant to Section 214(e)(1), a common carrier that has been designated as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier "shall be eligible to receive universal support in accordance with Section 254."

DOCKET NO. 97-239-C - ORDER NO. 97-958
NOVEMBER 24, 1997
PAGE 2

We have examined this matter, and hold that all of the requesting Local Exchange Carriers meet all of the Federal eligibility criteria set forth in Section 214(e)(1) of the 1996 Act, with two exceptions. First, GTE notes in its application that, at present, it does not comply with the toll limitation requirement for provisioning Lifeline service, but that it is entitled to a waiver of such requirement pursuant to the FCC Order, and is thereby entitled to the designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier. We hereby grant GTE a waiver of the toll limitation requirement for provisioning Lifeline service for a period of twelve months, i.e., until January 1, 1999, since it is in the process of trying to meet the requirement. Second, the Coalition Companies request that we grant a blanket waiver with respect to the offering of the "toll control" requirement until such time as the FCC acts upon reconsideration requests of its Universal Service Order. Since this requirement is likely to undergo reconsideration, we grant the requested waiver. However, based on the above, we hereby designate all of the requesting LEC as Eligible Telecommunications Carriers for their service areas in South Carolina.

DOCKET NO. 97-239-C – ORDER NO. 97-958

NOVEMBER 24, 1997

Attachment A

MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA TELEPHONE COALITION

ALLTEL South Carolina, Inc.
Bluffton Telephone Company, Inc.
Chesnee Telephone Company
Chester Telephone Company
Farmers Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
Fort Mill Telephone Company
Hargray Telephone Company, Inc.
Heath Springs Telephone Company, Inc.
Home Telephone Company, Inc.
Horry Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
Lancaster Telephone Company
Lockhart Telephone Company
McClellanville Telephone Company
Norway Telephone Company
Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
Piedmont Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
Pond Branch Telephone Company
Ridgeway Telephone Company
Rock Hill Telephone Company
Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
St. Stephen Telephone Company
West Carolina Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
Williston Telephone Company

Corrected
December 4, 1997

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BEFORE

THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF
 SOUTH CAROLINA

DOCKET NO. 97-239-C - ORDER NO. 97-753

SEPTEMBER 3, 1997

IN RE: Proceeding to Establish Guidelines)	ORDER
for an Intrastate Universal Service)	ADDRESSING
Fund.)	THE UNIVERSAL
)	SERVICE FUND
)	
)	

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina for the establishment of an intrastate Universal Service Fund (USF), pursuant to South Carolina Code Ann. Section 58-9-280(E) (Supp. 1996). The original concept for this proceeding originated under our Docket No. 96-018-C, however, we subsequently ordered the opening of a new Docket to deal with Universal Service issues.

Accordingly, a hearing was held, beginning on August 4, 1997 in the offices of the Commission, with the Honorable Guy Butler, Chairman, presiding. The local exchange carriers (LECs) participating individually were GTE South, Inc. (GTE), BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc. (BellSouth) and United Telephone Company of the Carolinas, Inc. (United). Other LECs participated through the South Carolina Telephone Association (SCTA). Intervenors participating were MCI Telecommunications Corporation (MCI), The Alliance for South Carolina's Children (the Alliance), AT&T

Communications of the Southern States, Inc. (AT&T), the South Carolina Budget and Control Board (the Board), the Consumer Advocate for the State of South Carolina (the Consumer Advocate), the South Carolina Cable Television Association (SCCTA), WorldCom, Inc. (Worldcom), South Carolina Fair Share (S.C. Fair Share), the Women's Shelter, the South Carolina Public Communications Association (SCPCA), John C. Ruoff, PhD (Ruoff), American Communications Services, Inc. (ACSI), and LCI International, Inc. (LCI). Pro-Parents intervened in this case, but did not appear at the hearing. The Commission Staff (the Staff) also participated in the hearing.

SCTA was represented by M. John Bowen, Jr., Esquire and Margaret Fox, Esquire. SCTA presented the testimony of Peter F. Martin and H. Keith Oliver. GTE was represented by Steven W. Hamm, Esquire and William Flemming, Esq. GTE presented the testimony of Cedric L. Tracy. BellSouth was represented by Harry M. Lightsey, III, Esquire, Caroline Watson, Esquire, and William Ellenburg, Esquire. United was represented by James Wright, Esquire and Richard Whitt, Esquire. Neither BellSouth nor United presented witnesses in this case.

With regard to the Intervenor, MCI was represented by John M.S. Hoefer, Esquire, and Marsha A. Ward, Esquire. MCI presented the testimony of Melba Reid. The Alliance was represented by Robert Guild, Esquire. The Alliance presented the testimony of Dr. Mark N. Cooper. AT&T was represented by Francis P. Mood, Esquire, Steve A. Matthews, Esquire, and Kenneth P. McNeeley,

Esquire. AT&T presented the testimony of L.G. Sather. The Board was represented by Ed Evans, Esquire, and James Rion, Esquire. The Board presented the testimony of Ted L. Lightle. The Consumer Advocate was represented by Elliott F. Elam, Jr., Esquire. The Consumer Advocate presented the testimony of Michael A. Berson. SCCTA was represented by B. Craig Collins, Esquire. WorldCom was represented by Frank R. Ellerbe, III. Both S.C. Fair Share and the Women's Shelter were represented by Susan B. Berkowitz, Esquire. The Women's Shelter presented the testimony of Kathy Riley. SCPCA was represented by John F. Beach, Esquire. SCPCA presented the testimony of Walter Rice, who adopted the prefiled testimony of Clifton Craig. John C. Ruoff, PhD appeared pro se. ACSI was represented by Russell B. Shetterly. LCI was represented by Robert Coble, Esquire, and Faye A. Flowers, Esquire. No witnesses were presented by SCCTA, WorldCom, S.C. Fair Share, ACSI, or LCI.

The Commission Staff (the Staff) was represented by F. David Butler, General Counsel. The Staff presented the testimony of Dr. R. Glenn Rhyne.

The language of S.C. Code Ann. Section 58-9-280(E) (Supp. 1996) is significant: "In continuing South Carolina's commitment to universally available basic local exchange telephone service at affordable rates and to assist with the alignment of prices and/or cost recovery with costs, and consistent with applicable federal policies, the commission shall establish a universal service fund (USF) for distribution to a carrier(s) of last resort. The

commission shall issue its final order adopting such guidelines as may be necessary for the funding and management of the USF.... These guidelines must not be inconsistent with applicable federal law and shall address, without limitation, the following:

(1) The USF shall be administered by the commission or a third party designated by the commission under guidelines to be adopted by the commission.

(2) The Commission shall require all telecommunications companies providing telecommunications services within South Carolina to contribute to the USF as determined by the commission.

(3) The Commission also shall require any company providing telecommunications service to contribute to the USF if, after notice and opportunity for hearing, the commission determines that the company is providing private local exchange services or radio-based local exchange services in this State that compete with a local telecommunications service provided in this State.

(4) The size of the USF shall be determined by the commission and shall be the sum of the difference, for each carrier of last resort, between its costs of providing basic local exchange services and the maximum amount it may charge for the services. The commission may use estimates to establish the size of the USF on an annual basis, provided it establishes a mechanism for adjusting any inaccuracies in the estimates.

(5) Monies in the USF shall be distributed to a carrier of last resort upon application and demonstration of the amount of the difference between its cost of providing basic local exchange

services and the maximum amount it may charge for such services.

(6) The commission shall require any carrier of last resort seeking reimbursement from the fund to file the information necessary to determine the costs of providing basic local exchange telephone services. In the event that a carrier of last resort does not currently conduct detailed cost studies relating to such services, the commission shall allow for an appropriate surrogate for such study.

(7) The commission shall have the authority to make adjustments to the contribution or distribution levels based on yearly reconciliations and to order further contributions or distributions as needed.

(8) After notice and an opportunity for hearing to all affected carriers, the commission by rule may expand the set of services within the definition of universal service based on a finding that the uniform statewide demand for such additional service is such that including the service within the definition of universal service will further the public interest; provided, however, that before implementing any such finding, the commission shall provide for recovery of unrecovered costs through the USF of such additional service by the affected carrier of last resort." With this statute as our charge, we can now analyze the evidence presented in this case, and address various issues necessary to the realization of our statutory duties as set out by the General Assembly.

As noted in the testimony of Dr. R. Glenn Rhyne, findings are

necessary regarding certain aspects of the intrastate universal service funding process, while other issues can be addressed in the future. We agree that while we must comply with the requirements of the Code section as listed above, the law does not require the resolution of all universal service and universal funding issues by August 27. We further agree with Dr. Rhyne's testimony that states that the size of the intrastate universal service fund should be established with the recognition that the size of the fund must be adjusted over time as cost models are employed by the Commission and actual funding is required. In addition, guidelines for the establishment of an administrative process (funding and management) for the USF can be determined within this hearing subject to periodic modifications. Various other guidelines can also be formulated to provide for a meshing of the interstate and intrastate universal service concepts to the greatest extent possible.

S.C. Code Ann. Section 58-9-280 (Supp. 1996) defines universal service as "... the providing of basic local exchange telephone service, at affordable rates, upon reasonable request, to all residential and single-line business customers within a defined area." Section 254 of the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 defined universal service as "... an evolving level of telecommunications services that the Commission (FCC) shall establish periodically... taking into account advances in telecommunications and information technologies and services." Section 254, Part B of the Telecommunications Act establishes the

basis for policies regarding the preservation and advancement of universal service. These policies are for quality services at affordable rates; access to advanced telecommunications and information services; access in rural and high cost areas to telecommunications and information services reasonably comparable to rates charged for similar services in urban areas; equitable and nondiscriminatory contributions from all providers of telecommunications services; specific, predictable, and sufficient federal and state support mechanisms necessary to preserve universal service; access to advanced telecommunications services for schools, rural health care providers, and libraries.

We believe that it is essential to mesh the components of state and federal law and the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) Universal Service Order to the greatest extent possible so as to avoid inconsistencies and to seek to optimize universal telecommunication service and universal service fund processes to the benefit of South Carolina consumers.

We compliment the participants in this proceeding for presenting some excellent proposals. Because of the sheer volume of these, we cannot herein fully discuss each one. However, this Commission wishes to assure all parties that all of the testimony and exhibits were considered before arriving at our conclusions in this matter.

Keith Oliver presented, on behalf of the South Carolina Telephone Association, a document called "Guidelines for the South Carolina Universal Service Fund (USF)," developed by the South